

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday September 24, 2006

Welsh Methodist Thomas Coke made 18 Atlantic crossings for the gospel. On this day in 1785, he sailed for Nova Scotia. But the storms of the North Atlantic were so severe, the frightened captain – confusing Coke with Jonah – threatened to throw him into the ocean. At long last, on Christmas Day, the battered boat limped into the bay at Antigua where Coke set up a thriving ministry. Years later, en route to India, he died and was buried at sea. Do we get it? Let us pray.

Dear Lord: We thank You that, as Christians, we've received such great good news of reconciliation in Christ that, ever since it was first proclaimed in Palestine, and ever since we received Your Commission to pass it on to all the world, Christians have proclaimed it far and wide. We thank You that, through the millennia and across so many miles, that faithful proclamation of the gospel reached even us and, through it, You've called us to Yourself. May we not fail to so appreciate this, Your grace and peace, that we might receive it with gladness and share it with others in grateful obedience. If it is true, Lord, that, in Christ, we were being reconciled to You, and our sins were not counted against us, what could be better news? What, O Lord, could be more important?

We thank You for all who have had a hand in our receiving Your words of grace and peace. We thank You for faithful ministers, Sunday School teachers, evangelists, friends, neighbors, and even strangers who have gone out of their way and into Yours to share the good news with us. Thank You for the eternal results of their ministries. And especially today, we thank You for our brother Thomas and for his faithfulness. We thank You for the eternal results of his ministry. And we thank You for Your Spirit's applying this good news to the hearts of all who would hear. Help us to hear better. May we share in the work with a commitment that stems from hearts overflowing with praise.

Lord, we know that there are many unmet needs in the lives assembled here around us this morning. We know some of them, but not all of them. We know some of them to some extent. We know none of them as You do. But help us to care in ways that count.

Help us to minister to one another and to those we encounter in our workaday worlds.

We ask for these favors in Your name as we add the words You taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.